

Dating services

If you're looking for friendship or companionship, you may decide to seek the assistance of a dating service to meet other people. Check dating services carefully before you sign a contract or pay any money down.

The prices for dating services start at around \$250, but may be much more. Dating services are regulated by state law. The law helps protect consumers and provides a way to obtain refunds for undelivered services. Under the law:

- Dating services must specify the length of time covered by the member's contract, not to exceed two years.
- The full price of membership must be disclosed, including any interest or other charges.
- New members must be informed of their three-day right to cancel.

To further protect consumers, dating services that require customers to pay more than \$100 in advance fees are required to establish proof of financial responsibility with the state by maintaining a \$25,000 bond, certificate of deposit, or escrow account, or by obtaining an irrevocable letter of credit.

Choosing a dating service

If you're interested in contracting with a dating service, consider the following before making a decision:

- Exactly what services are included in the fees? Several types of plans may be available at different rates.
- What is the success rate? Don't be swayed by a few dramatic testimonials. Ask for references or verification of any success statistics.
- What geographical areas are served?

- Do you have the right to decline an introduction with no penalty against your membership?
- What are the risks? What kind of measures are in place related to confidentiality, safety, and security?
- What are the fees? Find out the full costs and obligations of the service. Can you afford the program?
- Can you get a refund if you move away from the area, drop out of the program, or are unsuccessful in finding suitable companionship?
- What's the reputation of the dating service? Is it in good financial condition? How long has it been operating? Can it provide references?

Don't feel pressured by persuasive sales techniques from dating service personnel who receive commissions for the memberships they sell. Sales presentations may include

emotional appeals. Don't let your heart control our purse strings. Take the time to thoroughly review the service and understand any contract you're asked to sign.

For more information, or to file a complaint, contact the Bureau of Consumer Protection at:

(800) 422-7128

FAX: (608) 224-4939

TTY: (608) 224-5058

E-MAIL:

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